

Capturing a Drawing

ART 220 · Digital Illustration · Session 09

SESSION 09
09.22.26

Workhorse Collective

Name Abraham Garcia
Email abe@wrkhrs.co

ART 220 · Fall 2026

Meets Tue + Thu, 12:30 to 3:20
Today Session 09 · 09.22.2026

Three things today, and you leave with most of Thursday done.

01 · Mark sheet

Twenty minutes. Fill a sheet with every mark you own, in ink and in pencil. We scan it and photograph it, and compare the two on screen. Your marks are the example for the rest of class.

03 · Twelve thumbnails

Forty minutes. Two thumbnails for each of six starting points, with the words placed in every one. Most of what is due Thursday.

02 · How to capture

Forty-five minutes. Scanning, photographing, resolution, and setting the black and white points. What a 9 by 12 drawing has to be to print at 18 by 24.

04 · Thursday, Sep 24

Your subject, twelve thumbnails with the one you are taking forward marked, and one larger study of the words. Uploaded before class.

Handed out today

One sheet to print, and one you fold.

Mark sheet

/HANDOUTS/P2-MARK-SHEET.PDF

Twelve boxes, each naming a kind of mark: thin line, thick line, hatching, stipple, solid fill, dry brush, pencil, a torn edge, the smallest thing you can still read. Fill every box by hand. This is the first twenty minutes.

Thumbnail pages

LETTER PAPER, FOLDED

Fold a letter sheet into eight frames, one page for each way of thinking about your subject. This is the last part of class, and it is most of what is due Thursday.

Your subject

THE LAST DAY TO CHANGE IT

One of the thirteen on the projects page, or one you bring today. After today the subject is fixed and you are drawing.

The mark sheet

TWENTY MINUTES. EVERY MARK YOU OWN, ON ONE SHEET.

WORKHORSE

Fill all twelve boxes. Do not be careful.

What goes in

INK AND PENCIL BOTH

The pens and brushes you actually have. If you only own one pen, change how hard you press and how fast you move. A mark you cannot repeat is not a mark you can use in a poster.

The two that matter most

BOX 01 AND BOX 12

Your thinnest line, and the smallest thing you can still read. Those are the two that break when the drawing is captured, and you are about to watch them break.

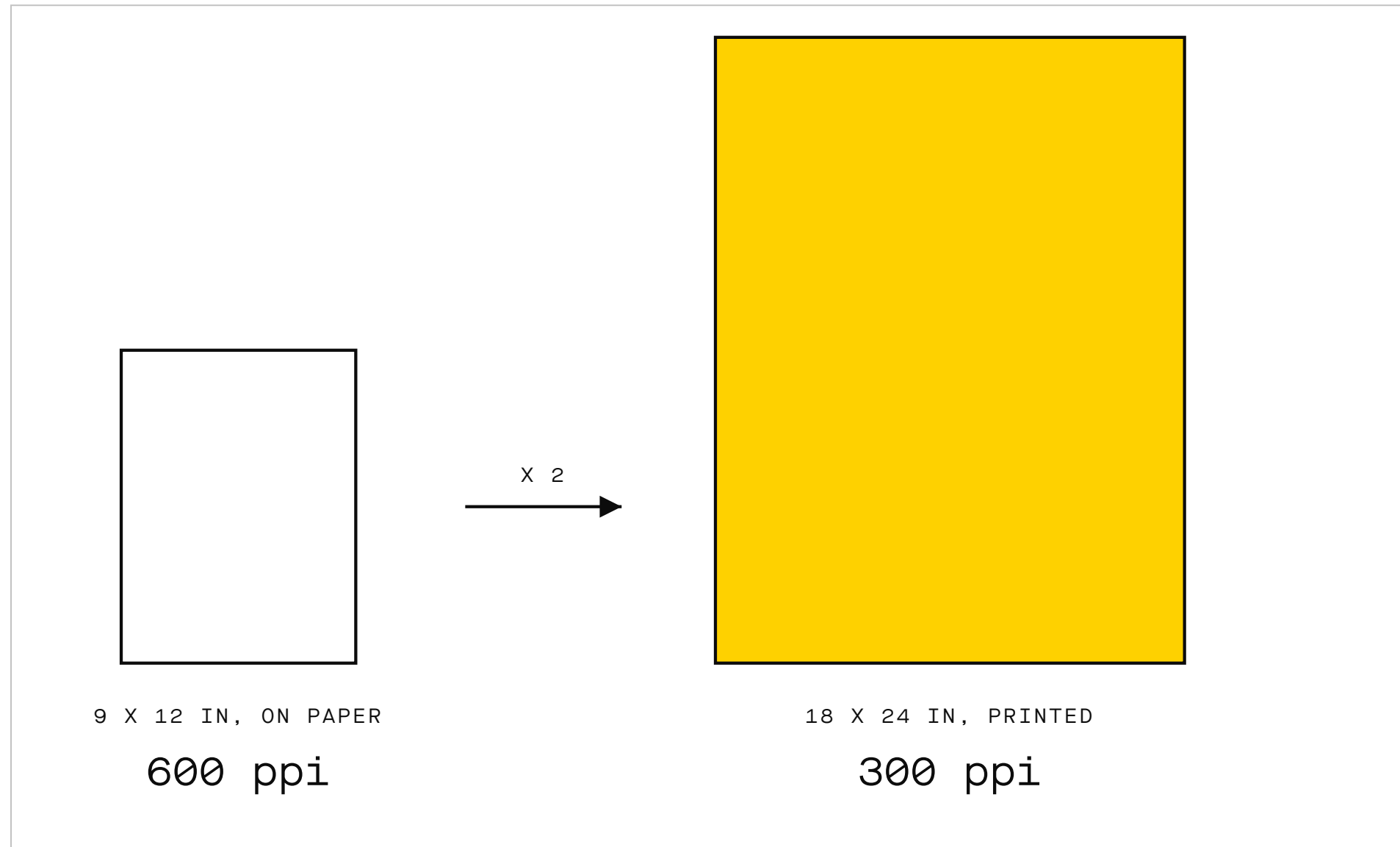
At the twenty minute mark

BRING IT UP FRONT

We scan a few at 600 and shoot the same sheets on a phone. Those files are the pictures for the next forty-five minutes.

Capturing a drawing

A 9 by 12 drawing has to become an 18 by 24 poster.



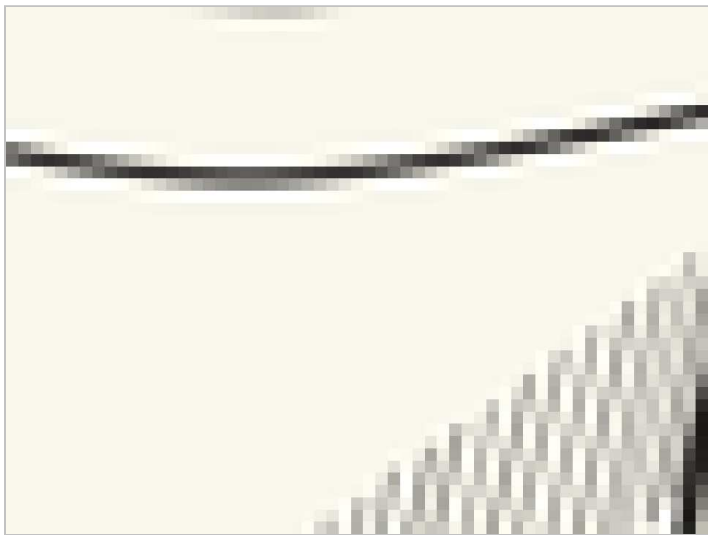
Double the size, halve the resolution. The pixels do not multiply when you scale a picture up. The ones you captured are all you will ever have.

An 18 by 24 poster at 300 ppi is 5400 by 7200 pixels. A 9 by 12 sheet is half that size on every side, so it has to be scanned at twice the resolution to arrive with the same pixels: 600.

Draw bigger than 9 by 12 and you can scan at less. Draw smaller and no scanner setting saves you.

Ask: what do you scan a 12 by 16 drawing at?

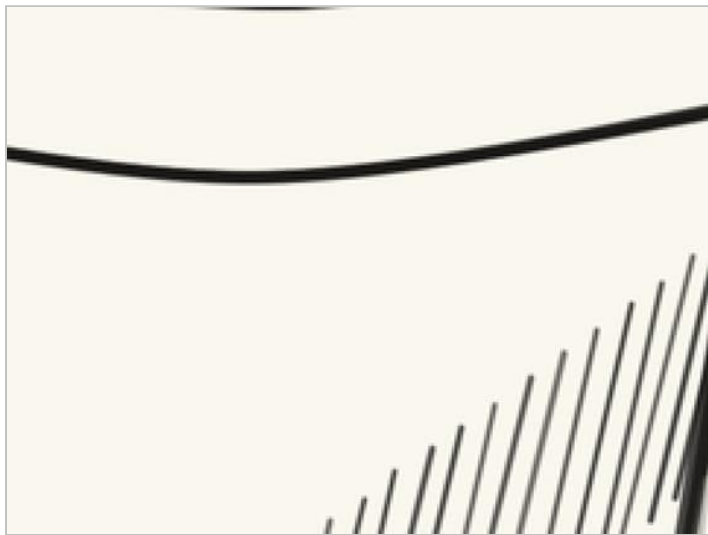
The same line, captured four ways, printed the same size.



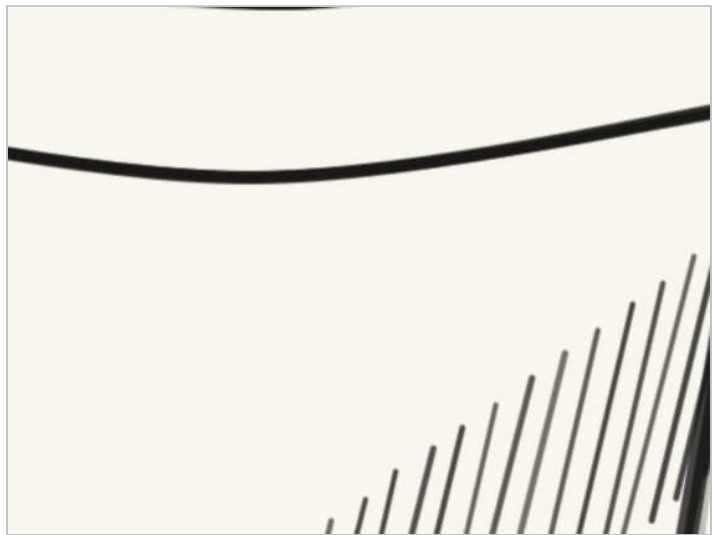
72 PPI
SCREEN RESOLUTION. NOTHING ELSE.



150 PPI
A NEWSPAPER, AT BEST.



300 PPI
PRINTING, AT FINAL SIZE.



600 PPI
PRINTING, WITH ROOM TO GROW.

ONE DRAWING. ONE CROP. THE ONLY THING THAT CHANGED IS WHAT THE SCANNER WAS SET TO.

02 · Two ways to capture

A scanner and a phone are not the same picture.



SCANNED

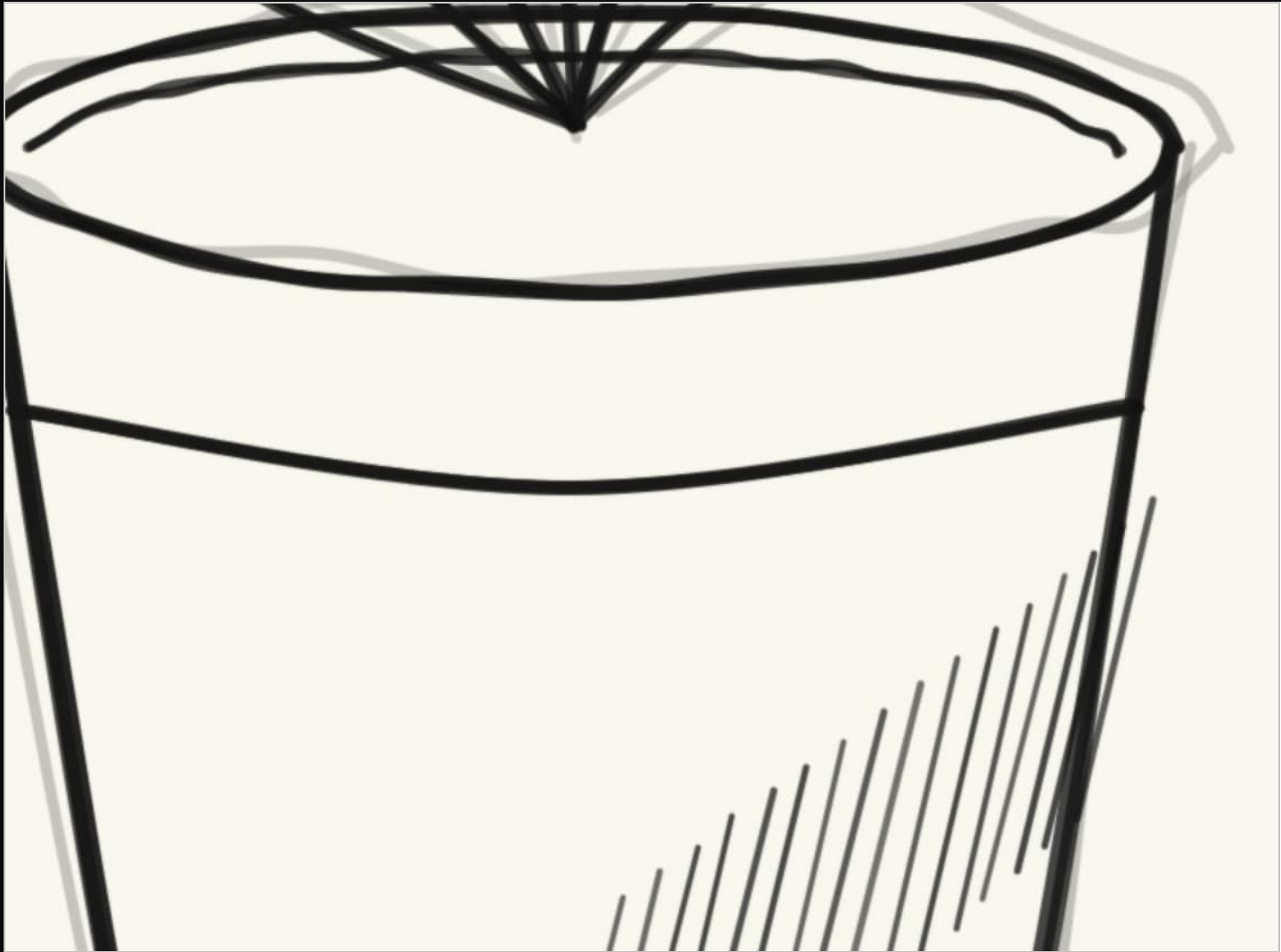
FLAT LIGHT. SQUARE TO THE PAGE. PAPER READS AS PAPER.

SAME DRAWING. SAME MINUTE. THE FILE ON THE RIGHT TAKES AN HOUR TO FIX.



PHOTOGRAPHED

WARM LIGHT. YOUR OWN SHADOW. THE PAGE LEANS AWAY.



SCANNED, AT 200%
THE HATCHING IS STILL SEPARATE LINES.



PHOTOGRAPHED, AT 200%
THE HATCHING IS CLOSING UP, AND THE PAPER IS A COLOR NOW.

THIS IS THE COMPARISON YOU JUST MADE WITH YOUR OWN SHEET.

How to photograph a drawing so the file is usable.

Light from both sides

OR FROM A WINDOW, FLAT ON

Two lamps at the same distance, or open shade outdoors. One lamp gives you a gradient across the sheet. Turn off the overhead light so you are not mixing two colors of light.

Get out of your own light

THE SHADOW IS YOURS

Stand to the side and use the timer, or prop the sheet up on a wall and step back. Most bad captures are the photographer's shadow.

Square and far

PHONE PARALLEL TO THE PAPER

Hold the phone flat to the sheet, not tilted. Back up and zoom in rather than leaning over it, which bends the edges.

Lock the exposure

AND SHOOT THE LARGEST FILE

Tap and hold to lock focus and exposure. Turn off any filter. If your phone can save RAW or HEIF at full size, do that.

Include the whole sheet

WITH A MARGIN

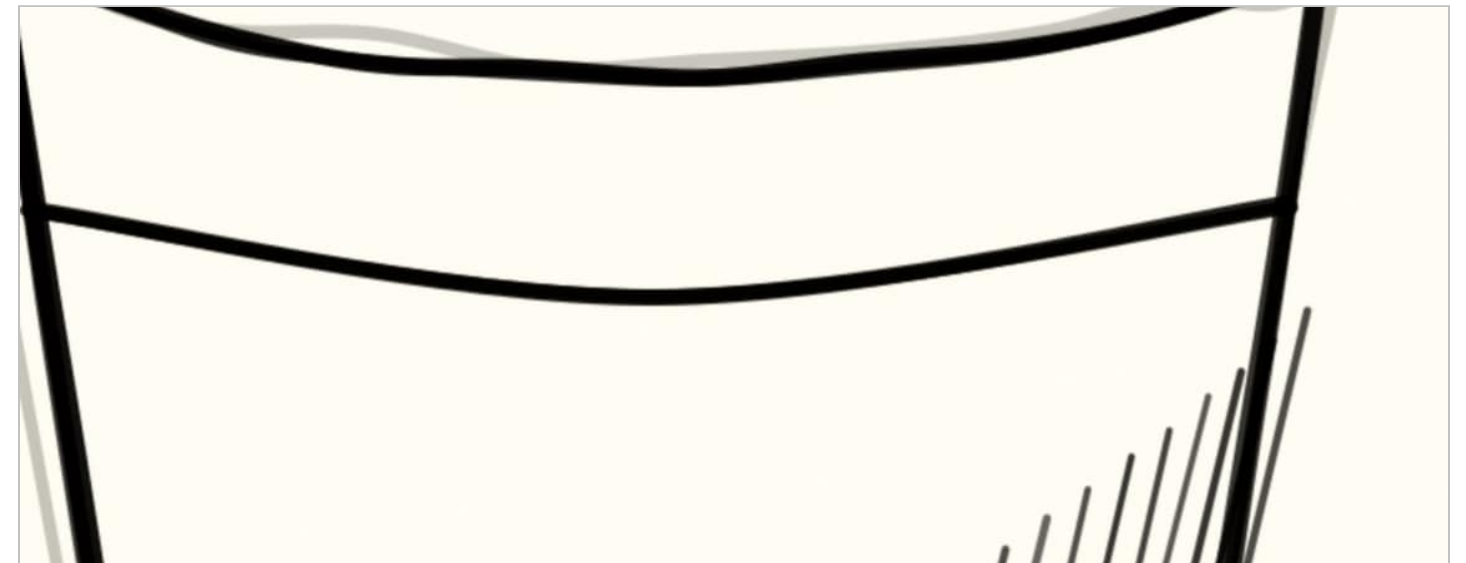
Leave paper visible on all four sides. You need the edges to straighten it, and the blank paper to set the white point.

Every scan arrives short at both ends. You set them.



OFF THE SCANNER

THE DARKEST INK IS MID GRAY. THE PAPER IS NOT QUITE WHITE. THE HISTOGRAM STOPS SHORT OF BOTH ENDS.



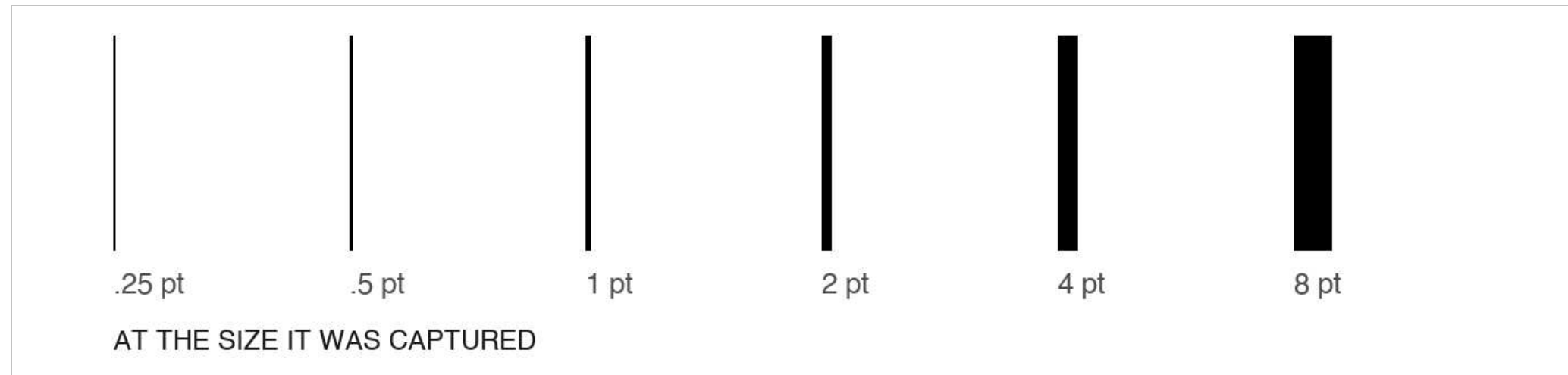
POINTS SET

INK IS BLACK, PAPER IS WHITE, AND THE PENCIL UNDER IT IS STILL THERE.

Five moves, in this order, every time.

01 · Straighten and crop BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE	Rotate until the sheet edges are square, then crop to the drawing. Everything after this assumes the file is straight.
02 · Set the white point THE PAPER	Pull the white slider down to where the paper starts. The paper goes white and most of the dust goes with it.
03 · Set the black point THE INK	Pull the black slider up to where the ink starts. Stop when the thin lines are solid. Past that you eat your own hatching.
04 · Clean what is left BY HAND	A white brush on the specks the levels did not take. Do not use a filter for this; filters take marks you meant to keep.
05 · Separate the line ITS OWN LAYER	The line on one layer over a white ground, so color can go underneath it. That is the file you color on October 1.

The thinnest line you can draw may not be a line you can print.



Top: six weights at the size they were captured. Below: the same file doubled to poster size. Look at the two thinnest. They do not disappear, they go gray and uneven, because at 300 ppi a quarter point line is about one pixel and there is nothing to enlarge. The heavy weights double cleanly.

A gray, uneven line is a problem later: setting the black point turns it patchy, and a screenprint has a floor of its own, where a line thinner than about a point breaks up and a gap thinner than that fills in with ink.

You are not being asked to draw heavy. You are being asked to know which of your marks are at the edge, and to use them on purpose.

Save the capture once, and never work on it.

The capture

TIFF OR PNG, UNTOUCHED

Straight off the scanner, at 600, before you change anything. Rename it and leave it alone. If your clean-up goes wrong, this is what you go back to.

The working file

PSD OR AI, LAYERS KEPT

Everything you do happens here: levels as an adjustment layer, the line on its own layer, color underneath. Layers named.

JPEG

FOR SENDING, NOT FOR WORKING

JPEG throws away detail to make the file small, and it does its worst damage exactly where a drawn line meets white paper. Never scan to JPEG, and never save a working file as one.

On Thursday

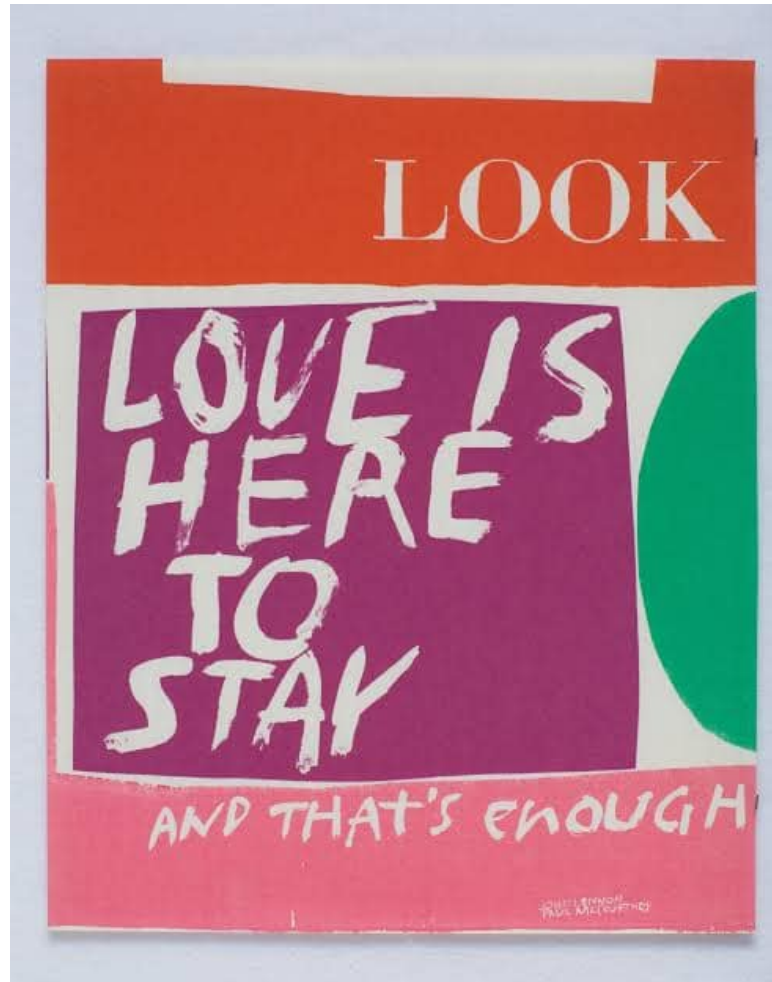
BRING THE FILE, NOT JUST THE PAPER

Your thumbnails can be photographed. The drawing you take forward gets captured properly in class on Tuesday Sep 29.

Corita Kent

A nun in Los Angeles who made posters out of words, three colors at a time, and printed enough for everyone.

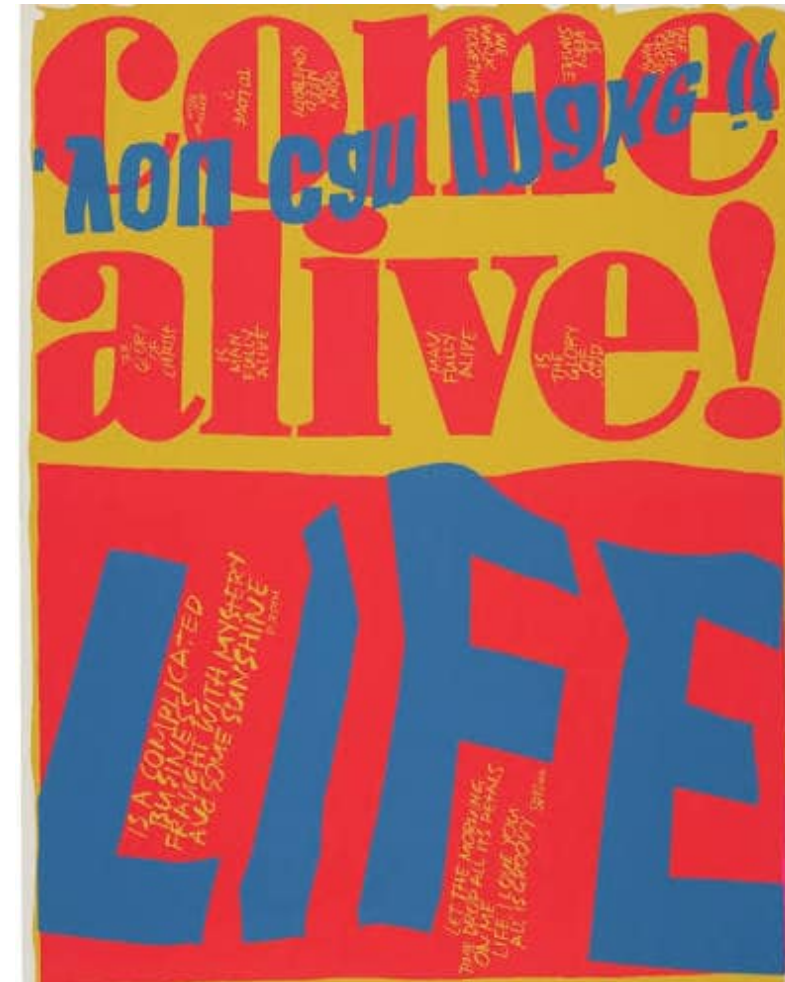
The words are the poster.



CORITA KENT · LOVE IS HERE TO STAY, 1960S

A MAGAZINE MASTHEAD, A LYRIC, AND THE LETTERS CUT BY HAND. THREE COLORS AND THE PAPER.

SHE TOOK WORDS FROM SIGNS, PACKAGES AND SONGS. THE DRAWING IS THE LETTERING.



CORITA KENT · COME ALIVE, 1967

A SOFT DRINK SLOGAN AND A MAGAZINE NAME. THE SMALL HANDWRITING LIVES INSIDE THE BIG LETTERS.

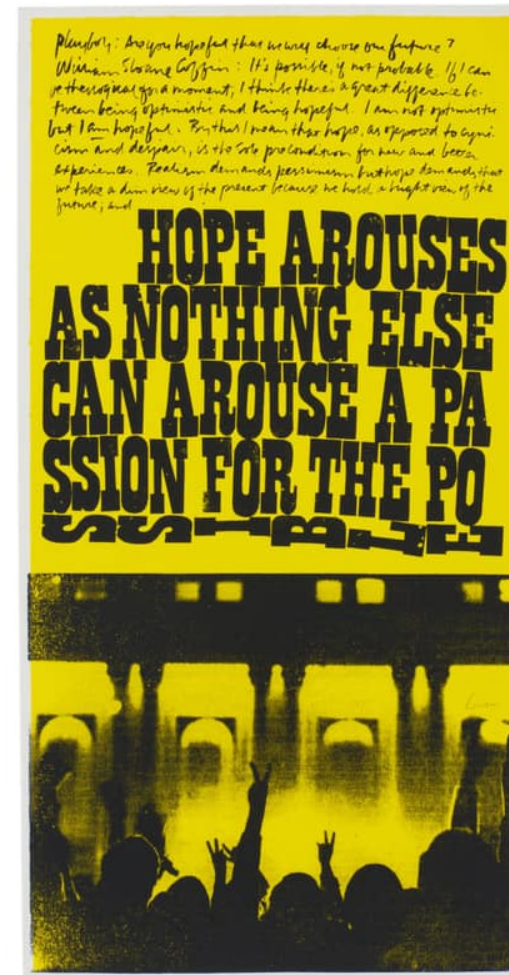
Cut the letters, or write them. Never type them.



CORITA KENT · GIVE THE GANG OUR BEST, 1960S

LETTERS CUT FROM PAPER AND TURNED SIDWAYS. READING IT TAKES A SECOND, AND THAT SECOND IS THE POSTER.

FOR YOUR POSTER: LETTERS DRAWN OR CUT ON PAPER, CAPTURED WITH THE DRAWING.



CORITA KENT · HOPE AROUSES, 1969

BLOCK LETTERS AS BIG AS THE SHEET, A LINE OF HANDWRITING ABOVE, A CROWD BELOW. TWO COLORS.

She taught it the way we are doing it today.



IMMACULATE HEART ART DEPARTMENT, 1955
LONG TABLES, EVERYONE WORKING AT ONCE, THE WALL FULL OF THE LAST WEEK'S PRINTS.



A WALL OF HER PRINTS
DOZENS OF SMALL SHEETS, EACH ONE A FEW WORDS AND A FEW COLORS. QUANTITY WAS THE METHOD.

RULE 8: DO NOT TRY TO CREATE AND ANALYZE AT THE SAME TIME. THEY ARE DIFFERENT PROCESSES.

Where to look.

CORITA.ORG, THE COLLECTION

The Corita Art Center. Hundreds of prints, searchable by decade. Start in the 1960s.

EYE ON DESIGN · HOW TO FIGHT THE POWER WITH JOY

Theo Inglis on the posters, the classroom, and why screenprint: a quantity of original art for those who cannot afford to purchase high-priced art.

ART DEPARTMENT RULES

Ten rules from her classroom. Rule 7: the only rule is work.

PRINT · 2016 AIGA MEDALIST

Callie Budrick. She sent students to find the novel and beautiful in magazines and supermarket packages.

Thumbnails

The thinking part of the project. Five ways through one subject, then refine the ones you liked.

This is the thinking part. Work through your subject one way at a time.

The paper FOLD, DO NOT PRINT	Fold a letter sheet in half, in half again, then once the other way, and hold it wide. Eight tall frames a page, each 2.75 by 4.25. One page per way of thinking.
01 · Object ONE PAGE	One thing from the subject, drawn straight. The rock in Sinners. A pair of shoes.
02 · Symbol ONE PAGE	A stand-in. What the subject means rather than what it looks like.
03 · Pattern ONE PAGE	One mark repeated until the repeating is the picture. Your mark sheet is full of candidates.
04 · Words ONE PAGE	The title does the drawing. Try it even if you already know you are drawing a picture.
05 · Scene ONE PAGE	Last, because it is the one everyone wants to start with. A moment with more than one thing in it.
Then refine A FRESH SHEET	Take the ones you liked, from any page, and draw them again, larger and better. Mark the one you are taking forward.

One thing from the subject, and it is the whole poster.



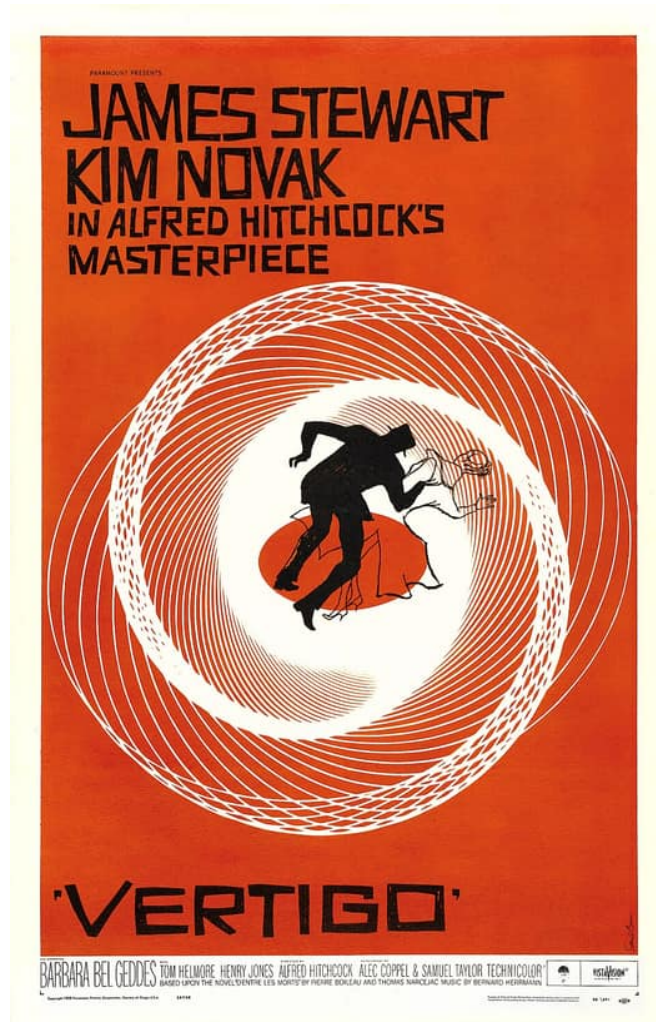
SAUL BASS · THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM, 1955
A FILM ABOUT ADDICTION. ONE ARM. NOTHING ELSE GOT IN.



SAUL BASS · ANATOMY OF A MURDER, 1959
A COURTROOM FILM. A BODY, CUT INTO THE PIECES THE TITLE PROMISES.

THE OBJECT PAGE. EIGHT THINGS FROM YOUR SUBJECT, ONE PER FRAME, DRAWN STRAIGHT.

A stand-in for what the subject means.



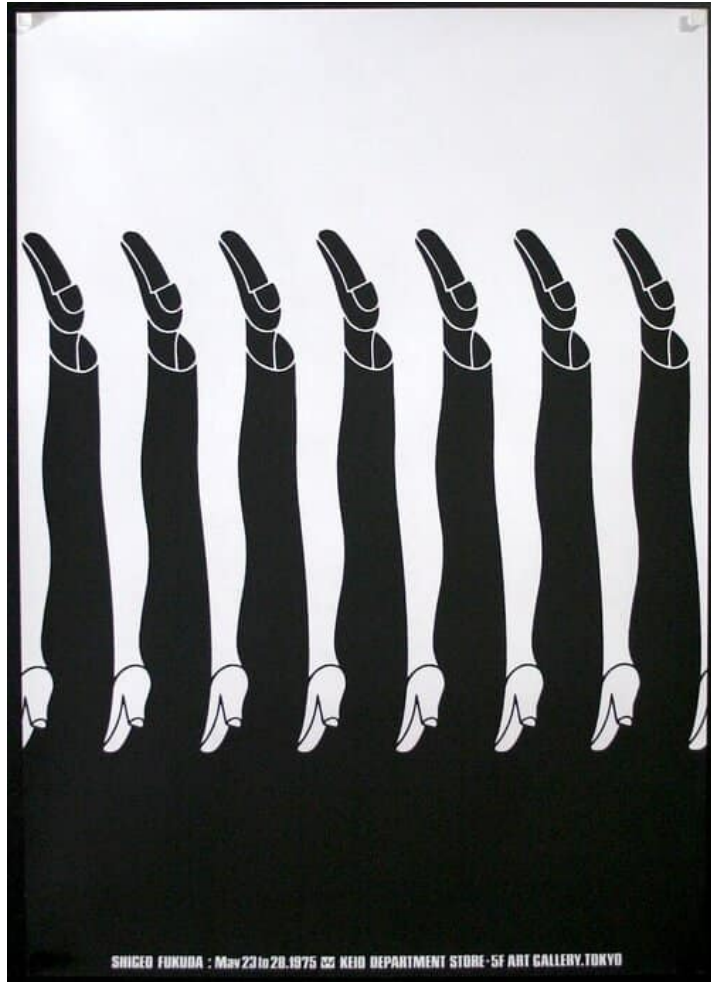
SAUL BASS · VERTIGO, 1958
VERTIGO IS A FEELING. THE SPIRAL IS THE FEELING; THE FIGURES ARE SMALL.

THE SYMBOL PAGE. WHAT THE SUBJECT MEANS, NOT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.



NOMA BAR · MURAKAMI COVERS, VINTAGE
FOUR NOVELS, FOUR SYMBOLS. EACH IS ONE SHAPE AND THE SECOND PICTURE INSIDE IT.

One mark repeated until the repeating is the picture.



SHIGEO FUKUDA · KEIO DEPARTMENT STORE, 1975

ONE LEG, REPEATED. THE WHITE BETWEEN THE BLACK LEGS IS A SECOND ROW OF LEGS. THE PATTERN IS THE WHOLE POSTER.

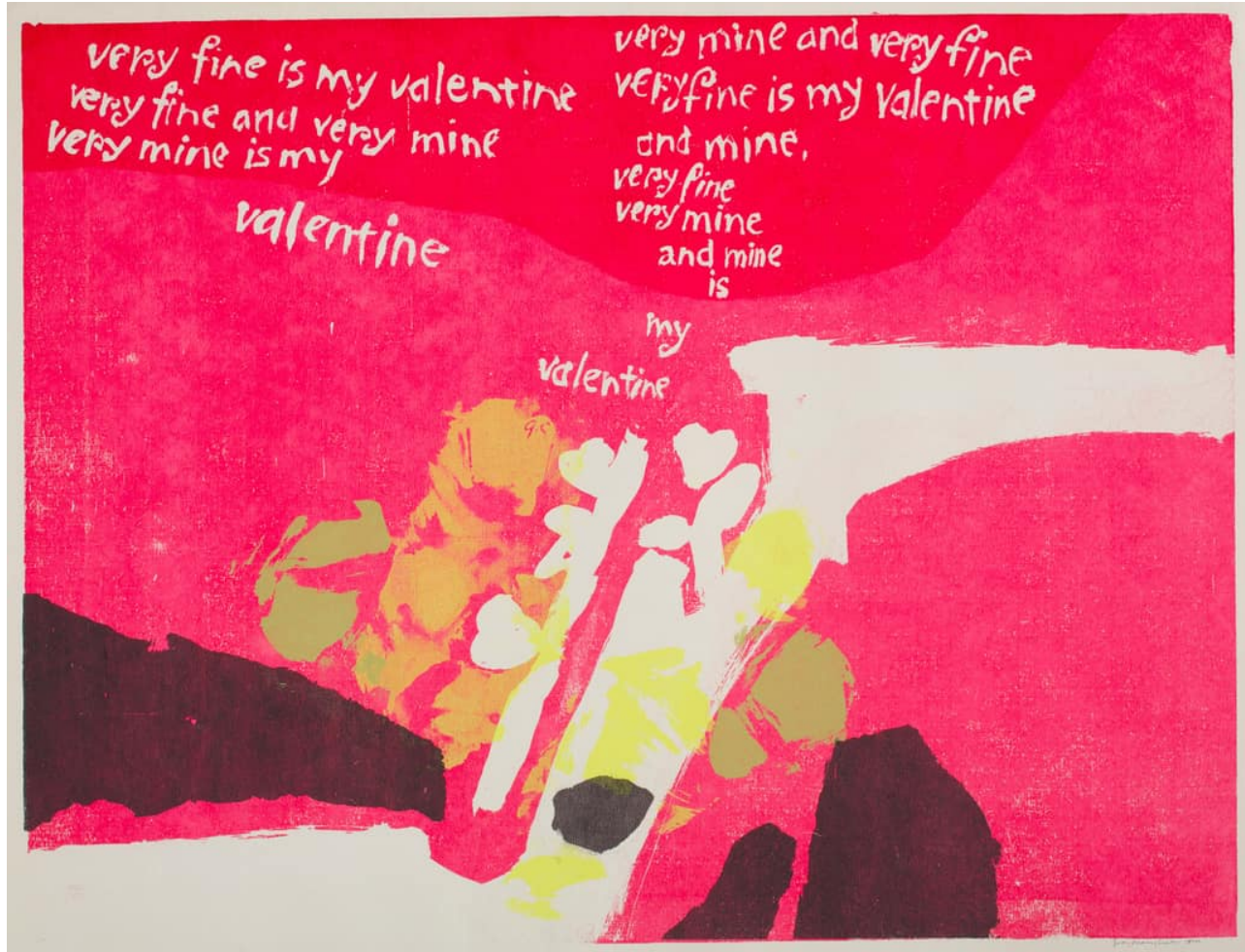


ALEXANDER GIRARD · ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT PANEL, 1972

CIRCLES, TRIANGLES AND ARCHES, REPEATED IN ROWS UNTIL THEY ARE A BUILDING. NO DRAWING, ONLY THE REPEAT.

THE PATTERN PAGE. PICK A MARK, PICK A RULE, AND LET THE REPEAT MAKE THE SHAPE.

The title does the drawing.



CORITA KENT · VERY FINE IS MY VALENTINE, 1960S
THE WORDS ARE WRITTEN BY HAND, THREE COLORS, SCREENPRINTED. THERE IS NO PICTURE APART FROM THE WRITING.

THE WORDS PAGE. DRAW THE TITLE BY HAND, BIG ENOUGH TO BE THE PICTURE.



CORITA KENT · AMERICAN SAMPLER, 1969
THREE WORDS IN THREE COLORS, THE LETTERS CUT AND SHOVED TOGETHER UNTIL THE WORDS ARE THE IMAGE. NOTHING ELSE ON THE SHEET.

A moment with more than one thing in it, and still one read from across the room.



TOMER HANUKA · THE GRADUATE, MONDO

A POOL, A RAFT, A PARTY GOING ON WITHOUT HIM. THE WHOLE FILM IS IN THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO HALVES.

THE SCENE PAGE, LAST. A SCENE NEEDS ONE IDEA AS MUCH AS AN OBJECT DOES.



TOMER HANUKA · BLADE RUNNER, MONDO

RAIN, NEON, TWO FACES AND A STREET. MANY THINGS, ONE COLOR PLAN, AND THE TITLE DRAWN INTO THE FRAME.

Pick the ones you liked. Draw them again, bigger.

OBJECT

SYMBOL

PATTERN

WORDS

SCENE

HELD WIDE. EIGHT TALL FRAMES, 2.75 BY 4.25 IN.

THE REFINED SHEET

HELD TALL.
FOUR FRAMES,
4.25 BY 5.5 IN.
POSTER SHAPE.

CIRCLE THE ONE
GOING FORWARD.

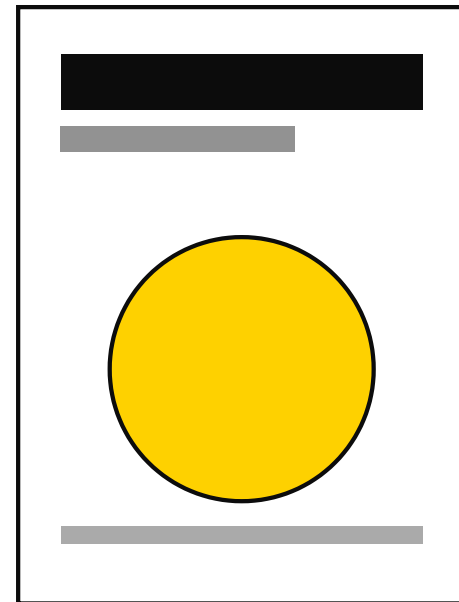
Go back through the five pages and mark the frames that still look good to you. Three to five is normal. They can all come from one page.

Fold a fresh sheet in half twice and hold it tall: four frames, each the shape of the poster. Draw each pick again in a bigger frame, fixing what the small one got wrong, with the words placed at their real size.

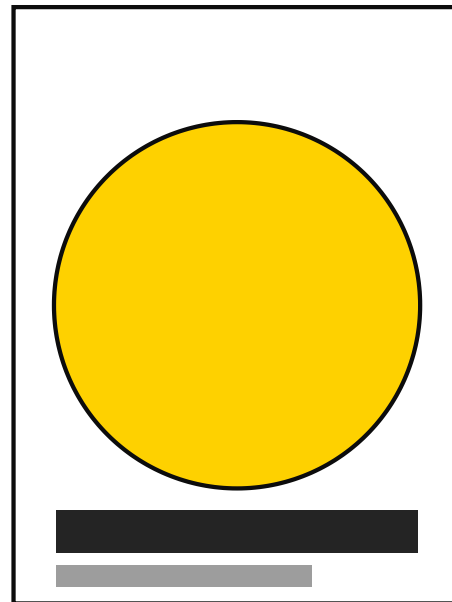
Circle the one you are taking forward. That sheet, plus the five pages, is what you upload Thursday.

Ask: does your pick still work with the title at full size?

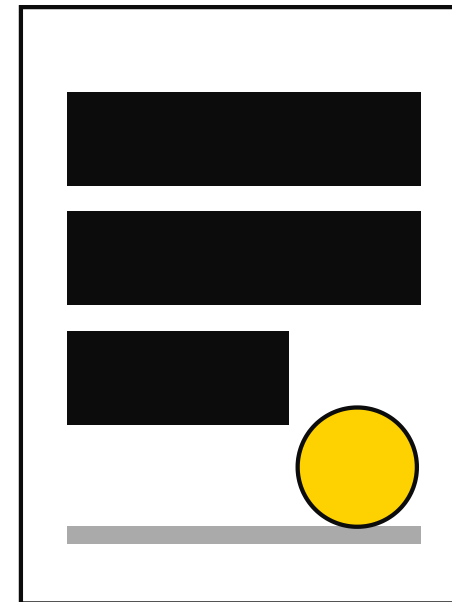
You have a thumbnail. Now start asking the rest of the questions.



PLANNED



ADDED AT THE END



WORDS CARRY IT

Where do the words go? Look at the three frames. Plan them in, or they end up parked at the bottom. Sometimes they are the picture.

Drawn or set? Are you lettering the title by hand, or setting it in a font? Decide now, because it changes the drawing.

Which three colors? Light, middle and dark. Where does each one go?

Which marks? Look at your mark sheet. Which of those twelve is this poster made of?

What does the drawing need to be? One sheet, 9 by 12 or bigger, with everything above on it. That is the next two weeks.

Thursday Sep 24, uploaded before 12:30.

01 · Your subject

One line: which of the thirteen, and the exact words your poster has to carry, in order of size. Check the dates on the venue's own page.

03 · One words study

The words from that thumbnail at a larger size: drawn letters, or your chosen font printed out and placed on the sketch.

02 · Your thumbnails

Photographed or scanned: the five folded pages and the sheet where you refined the ones you liked. Words in every frame, the one you are taking forward marked.

04 · Then, Oct 1

The finished drawing on paper, captured and cleaned in class. Between Thursday and then, you are drawing.

The capture is the drawing

Everything after Thursday runs on the file you make from the paper. A drawing you cannot capture is a drawing nobody sees.